2.

# A Seaſonable Sermon

FOR

## Theſe Vnſeaſonable Times.

VVherein is ſet forth the danger of this Sin-ſick Nation, for which Almighty God hath (in part) afflicted us with grievous judgements, and will (without timely repentance) bring to utter ruine.

Very fitting for all men to reade, and make uſe of.

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HOSEA 13. 9.
*Thy deſtruction is of thy ſelfe.*

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*M DC XLIV.*

PSAL. 107. 34.

[*He turneth*] *a fruitfull Land into barrenneſſe for the wickedneſſe of them that dwell therein.*

WE have here in my Text as in much of the world, a woful change, wrought by a powerfull author, and upon a juſt merit: The change of a fruitfull Land into barrenneſſe; the author, GOD, the almighty arbiter of the world, *He turneth*; the merit, *the wickedneſſe of the inhabitants*. Theſe three then muſt be the meaſure of my tongue, and your eares, the *change*,

the *Author*, the *Merit*. In the *change* you ſhall ſee the *Act* and the *Subject*. For the firſt: All theſe earthly things have their turnes; the whole World is the proper region of mutability. I know not whether I ſhould exempt heaven it ſelfe. Even there I finde a change, of Motion, of Face, of Quality; Motion whether by conſiſtence, or retrogradation, *Sun ſtand thou ſtill in Gibeon, and thou Moone in the vally of Aialon, Ioſ* 12. 10. There was a change in not moving. And for Retrogradation, *The ſhadow went back ten degrees in the diall of Ahaz, Eſ.*38.8. A change of Face, *the Sun was darkned, Luc.* 23. 45. when the Sun of righteouſneſſe was eclipſed, and ſhall be ſo againe ere he breake forth in full glory: *Then ſhall*

*ſhall the Sun be darkned, the Moone ſhall loſe her light, the Starres ſhall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven ſhall be ſhaken, Mat.24.29.* A change of quality; what need I feare to aſcribe that to this glorious frame, when the ſpirit of God can tell us; *They ſhall waxe old as a garment, as a veſture thou ſhalt change them, and they ſhall be changed.* In the meane time our eyes can tell us, that the ſecond of theſe greater lights, the Moone, is the very embleme of mutability; never looking upon us twiſe with the ſame face; there is no moneth paſſeth over us, wherein ſhee is not both new and old, to the making up of a juſt and common riddle, that not exceeding the age of 28. daies, ſhee is yet no leſſe old then the world; ever filling

and waning, and like the true image of all mutability, never so blotted as in her greateſt brightneſſe.

Yea, what need we doubt to aſcribe ſome change to theſe materiall heavens; when if we looke to the inſide of them, we ſhall finde that there hath been the greateſt change in the very Angells; and for their preſent condition, that though the eſſence of the glorious ſpirits there, be immutable from within, having nothing in them that may worke their diſſolution or change, yet that we cannot ſay they are immutable from without, ſince if that power which gave them being, ſhould withdraw his hand, they could not be. It is the perfection of God only, to

to be abſolutely inalterable, and as to work freely, ſo to bee neceſſarily: ſo as our ſubtile *Bradwardine* maintaines that *ens neceſſarium* is the firſt attribute of God, that can fall under our notion. And even of this moſt glorious, infinite, and only perfect and abſolute being, we may ſafely (though in all awfull reverence) ſay, with *Gregory*, *Mutat ſententiam, non mutat conſilium*, He changeth his threatned doom, but never his decree. But, how high are weflowne ere we were aware, me thinkes I heare the Angell ſpeake to me as to *Eſdras*; *Thy heart hath gone too farre in this world, and thinkeſt thou to comprehend the waies of the moſt High?*

Caſt we our eyes rather downe to the lower orbes of elementary

mixture; here is nothing to be ſeen but in a perpetuall gyre of mutation; the elements that are partners in quality, interchange with each other in ſubſtance, the mixed bodies can no more ſtand ſtill then the heaven whereby they are governed; for as that Sun never holds one minute in one place, never day walkes the ſame round, no more doe theſe inferior bodies continue one moment in the ſame eſtate, but ever altering; either growing up to their (ἀκμὴν) the verticall point of their being, or declining towards their corruption; inſomuch as Phyſitians obſerve, that every ſeaven years this body of ours is quite another from it ſelfe, and in a continuall renewing of ſupplies, or degrees of decaies. And

And if ye looke upon the greater bodies, the Sea and the Earth, yee ſhall ſee that the ſea is ever ebbing and flowing, and will want waves ere it want motion; The earth, which of all viſible things hath the ſtyle of cõſtancy [*terra quæ nunquam movebitur*] yet ſometimes feels the motion of Trepidation in her vaſt body: *The earth ſhook and trembled, and the foundations of the hills moved, and were ſhaken, Pſal.* 18.7. And alwaies in the ſurface of it feeles the motion of ſenſible mutation; the domeſtiques whereof, as all vegetative and ſome ſenſitive creatures, and the Lords thereof, rationall creatures, are ever as moving, as the earth is ſtill: ever breeding, borne, growing, declining, dying: And if ye match

theſe

theſe two together, ye ſhall ſee how the Sea and the Earth win of each other; it is full tide now, where there was a goodly crop: and where the oxe grazed, there the whale ſwims; How have wee ſeene ſteeples to ſtand in thoſe liquid cemiteries, in ſtead of maſts, & again the plough to goe, where the ſhip lately ſailed!

And as it is thus in the frame of nature, ſo of policy too, thoſe great and famous Monarchies of the world what ever precious metall, their *head, ſhoulders, waſt,* have beene of; yet their *feet* have been of *clay*, and are gone into duſt; Civility, arts, ſoverainty have, in an imitation of the Suns courſe, gone from Eaſt to Weſt, and will no where be fixed, till they

they be overtaken with the laſt revolution.

In vaine therefore ſhall wee look for conſtancy upon earth; look how poſſible it is for a man that ſtands, fortune-like, upon a round rolling ſtone in a ſmooth floore to be ſteddy in his poſture, ſo poſſible it is for us to be ſetled in an unchangeable condition, whiles we are upon this ſpheare of variableneſſe. Can we think that the world ſhall move, and wee ſtand ſtill? Were the Sun the center of motion, and the earth whirled about in this vaſt circumference, could we make account of reſt? And if in our own particular, we could either ſtay our foot, or ſhift it at pleaſure, notwithſtanding that inſenſible rapture

ture (as the Ant may creepe the contrary way to the violent circumvolution of the wheele) yet we muſt neceſſarily bee ſwayed with that univerſall ſwinge of mutability, wherewith all creatures are carried forcibly about. The moſt laſting Kingdomes therefore have had their periods; and of the moſt ſetled goverment, Gods hand-writing upon the wall goes ſo farre as to ſay, *Mene, mene, thy dayes are numbred.* Oh the fickleneſſe of this earthly glory and proſperity! Oh the glaſſy ſplendor of all humane greatneſſe; crackt with a touch, with a fall broken! who would ſet his heart upon theſe unſtable felicities? Doe ye not ſmile at the child, which when he hath raiſed a large bubble out of

of his wallnut-ſhell, joyes in that aery globe, and wonders at the goodly colours he ſees in it; which whiles he is ſhowing his owne face and his play-fellowes in that ſleight reflection, vaniſhes away, & leaves nothing but a little froathy ſpittle behind it? ſo ridiculous are wee, whiles we dote upon theſe fugitive contentments. The captive Prince in the ſtory, noted well when he lookt back upon the charet of his proud victor, that ſtill one ſpoake of the wheele went downe as another roſe; Think of the world as it is, O yee great ones, it turnes round, and ſo doe all things in it. Great *Saladine* cauſed it to be proclaimed, that he had nothing left him but his winding-ſheet. The famous Generall

nerall that thriſe reſcued Rome, came to *Date obolũ Beliſario*, one ſingle half-penny to *Belliſarius*. Take your turnes then for theſe earthly preeminences, but look at them ſtill as periſhing; and if you ayme at reſt, looke for it above all theſe whirling orbes of the viſible heavens; ſay of that Empyreall heaven, as God ſaid of the holy of holies which was the figure of it, *Hic requies mea in æternum*, *Here ſhall be my reſt for ever*: there as *Bernard* well, *is the true day that never ſets*, yea there is the perpetuall high-noone of that day, which admits no ſhadow. Oh then over-look all theſe ſublunary vanities; ſet your affections on things above, not on things on the earth; ſeek thoſe things which are above, where

where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God; There only shall you find true rest, and constant glory. This for the *act* of the turning, the *termes* or *subject* of it followes; *A fruitfull land into barrennesse.*

Philosophy hath wont to teach us that every change is to the contrary; here it is so, plainly; *Fruitfull* into *barren*, yea into the abstract *Barrennesse* it selfe: Small alterations are not noted; the growing of the grasse, the daily declining into age, though not without a kind of change, are insensible; but for *Aarons* dry rod to be budded, blossomed, almoned in a night; for the vigorous, and curled prisoner to become gray headed by morning; for the flourish-

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ing *Pentapolis*, to be turned ſuddainly into ſulphurous heapes, and ſalt-pits, theſe things fill the eye, not without an aſtoniſhment of the heart. The beſt beauty decaies by leaſure, but for a fleſhy Idoll at the Court, to become ſuddainly a leprous *Miriam*, is a plain judgement; Thus, when the faire face of the earth, ſhall be turned from a youthly and flouriſhing greenneſſe, into a parched, and withered deformity; the leaves which are the hayres, fall off, and give way to a loathſome baldneſſe; the towred Cities, which are the chaplets and dreſſes of that head, are torne downe, and turned to rubbiſh; the fountaines and rivers, which are the cryſtalline humours of thoſe eyes, are dryed up;

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the ſurface, which is the skin of that great body, is chopped, and chinked with drought, and burnt up with heat; thoſe ſweet waters of heaven, and thoſe balmy drops of fatneſſe wherewith it was wont to be beſprinkled, are reſtrained, and have given place to unwholſome ſereneneſſe, and killing vapors: ſhortly, that pampered plenty, wherewith it was glutted, is turned into a pinching want, this change is not more ſenſible, then wofull. It is a great judgement this of barrenneſſe, the curſe of the diſappointing figtree was but this; *Never fruit grow more on thee;* as contrarily, the creature was bleſſed in no other tearmes then *Creſcite & multiplicamini, Increaſe and multiply.* A barren

womb was *Michols* plague, for her ſcoffing at devotion. It was held by *Abimelec* no ſmall judgement that God inflicted on him in cloſing up all the wombs of the houſe of *Abimelec*, and therefore it is ſaid *Abraham prayed, and God healed Abimelec, and his wife, and his maid-ſervants*. And ſurely as the Iewes held this the reproch among women (though ours have not the ſame opinion, nor the ſame reaſon) *Luc.*1.25. (in ſo much as *Canta ſterilis* had been a ſtrange word, *Ep.* 54.1. were it not for that which followeth, *The deſolate ſhall have more children then the married;*) So this is *opprobrium terræ*, the reproch of our common mother, *an unbearing womb, and dry breſts, Oſe.* 9.14. What followes hence, but miſe-

Gen.20. 18.

v. 17.

miſerable famine, leanneſſe of body, languiſhing of ſtrength, hollowneſſe of eyes, drineſſe of bones, blacknes of skin, wringing of mawes, gnawing and clinging of guts, and in the end, the *pale horſe* of *death* followes the *black horſe* of *famine*, *Revel.* 6.8. And *Thoſe that are ſlaine by the ſword are better then they that are ſlaine with hunger*, *Lament.* 4.9. Yet let me tell you, by the way, the earthly and externall barrenneſſe is nothing to the inward and ſpirituall; where the heart is barren of grace, where the life is barren of good works, the man is not neare to curſing, but is under it. Yee know who ſaid *Give me children or elſe I dye*, *Gen.* 30.1. It was an over paſſionate word of a good woman; many a one lives,

and that with leſſe griefe and care, and more eaſe, without them; ſhe might have lived happy though unfruitfull, but ſurely a barren ſoule is both miſerable and deadly; God ſayes of it as the Lord of the ſoyle ſaid of the fruitleſſe fig-tree, *Exſcindatur, Cut it up, why keepeth it the ground barren?* If then wee find our ſelves in this condition, let us doe as *Solomon* ſayes the faſhion is of the barren womb, cry *Give, Give*, and never leave importunate craving till we finde the twins of grace ſtriving in the womb of our ſoules.

But yet if a dry Arabian deſert yeeld not a ſpire of graſſe; or the whitiſh ſands of Egypt (where *Nile* toucheth not) yeeld nothing but their Suhit and Gazul (fit for the

the furnace, not the mouth;) or if ſome ill-natur'd waſt, yeeld nothing but heath and furres, we never wonder at it; theſe doe but their kinde; But for a fruitfull land to be turned to barrenneſſe, is an uncouth thing; the very excellency of it aggravates the ſhame. And ſurely God would not doe it if it were not wondrous, he fetches light, not out of glimmering, but out of darkneſſe; he fetches not indifferent, but good out of evill. Wee weak agents (ſuch all naturall, and other voluntary are) deſcend by degrees from an extreme, by the ſtaires of a meane, and (that oft-times) ſenſible mutation; God, who is moſt free and infinite, is not tyed to our termes, he can in an inſtant turne faire into foule,

fruitfull into barren, light into darkneſſe, ſomething, yea all things into nothing, Preſent fruitfulneſſe therefore is no ſecurity againſt future barrenneſſe. It is the folly of nature to think it ſelfe upon too ſleight grounds ſure of what it hath. *Non movebor*, *David* confeſſes, was his note once, but he found change in it, and ſo ſhall we, if thou art rich in good works, as that chuffe was in proviſion, and ſaid, *Soule take thy eaſe*, let thy hand be out of ure a little through a lazy ſecurity, thou haſt forfeited all, by diſuſe, and maiſt expect to heare, *Stulte, hac nocte*: Thou art rich in profeſſion of Grace: Was any man more officious then *Demas*? yet he ſoon fell to imbrace the preſent world, with

a neglect of the future. Think not now that I am falling in with our late *Excutifidians*, to teach that a true, ſolid, radicated ſaving faith may be totally, finally loſt; no, I hate the motion: it is preſumption that I taxe, not well grounded aſſurance; preſumption of outward profeſſion, and priviledges, not aſſurance of the inward truth of grace. Preſume not, o vaine man, of what thou wert, or what thou haſt. Devills were Angells, Hieruſalem was the holy Citty, Rome was for her faith famous through all the world, *Rom.* 1. 8. *Woe to Ariel, to Ariel the City where David dwelt, Eſ.* 29. 1. Our owne once good eſtate may aggravate our miſery, can never ſecure our happineſſe. *Son of man, what ſhall*

*become of the vine of all plants?* (saith the Prophet) The more noble it is, the worse it speeds, if fruitlesse: Oh let us not be high-minded, but feare. England was once, yea lately was, perhaps is still, the most flourishing Church under heaven, that I may take up the Pro-
Es. 13. 19. phets words, *the glory of Churches, the beauty of excellency*, what it may be, what it will be, if we fall still into distractions, and various Sects, God knowes, and it is not hard for men to fore-see: Surely, if we grow into that Anarchicall fashion of *Independent congregations*, which I see, and lament to see, affected by too many, not without wofull successe; we are gone, we are lost in a most miserable confusion; we shall be, as when God over-

overthrew *Sodome* and *Gomorrah*; and it ſhall be with us, as the Prophet ſpeakes of proud, and glorious *Babylon*, *The ſhepheards ſhall not make their fold here; wild beaſts of the deſert ſhall lye here, and our houſes ſhall be full of dolefull creatures, and owles ſhall dwell, and ſatyres ſhall dance there, and the wild beaſts of the Iſlands ſhall cry in our deſolate palaces*: I take no pleaſure (God knowes) to ominate ill to my deare nation, and dearer mother the Church of England, for whoſe welfare and happineſſe I could contemne my owne life: but I ſpeake it in a true ſorrow of heart to perceive our danger, and in a zealous precaution to prevent it. Oh God, in whoſe hands the hearts of Princes and all the ſons of men are, *to turne* Eſ. 13. 20. 21.

*them*

*them, as the rivers of waters,* put it into the heart of our King and Parliament, to take ſpeedy order for the ſuppreſſion of this wild variety of Sects, and lawleſſe *independencies* ere it be too late. Thus much for the *ſubject* and *termes* of this change; The *agent* followes, *He turneth.*

Never was there any ſterility, whereof there may not be a cauſe given; Either, the ſeaſon is unkindly, parching with drought or drenching with wet, or nipping with froſt, or blaſting with pernicious aires, or rotting with mildewes; or, ſome miſ-accident of the place, inundations of waters, incurſions and ſpoyle of enemies, ſuddaine mortalities of the inhabitants, or ſome naturall fault in the

the ſoyle, or miſdemeanure of the owners; idleneſſe, ill-husbandry, in miſ-tilling, neglect of meet helps, unculture, ill choyce of ſeed; but what ever be the ſecond cauſe, we are ſure who is the firſt, *Hee turneth*: *Is there any evill in the City and he hath not done it?* Alas, what are all ſecondary cauſes, but as ſo many liveleſſe puppets? there is a divine hand unſeene, that ſtirres the wires, and puts upon them all their motion: ſo as our Saviour ſaid of *Pilate*, we may ſay of all the activeſt inſtruments both of earth, and hell, *Thou couldeſt have no power over mee, unleſſe it were given thee from above.*

Is *Ioſeph* ſold to the Merchants by the villany of his envious brethren? *The Lord ſent me before you,*

*Gen.*

*Gen.*51. Doe the *Chaldeans* and *Sabeans* feloniously drive away the heards of *Iob*, doth the Devill by a tempestuous gust blustor downe the house, and rob him of his children? *The Lord hath taken, Iob.* 1. Is a man slaine by chance-medly, the axe-head slipping from the helve? *Dominus tradidit.* So whether they be acts of nature, of will, of casualty, whether done, by naturall agents, by voluntary, by casuall, by supernaturall, *Digitus Dei est hic*; *He turneth.* What can all other causes either doe, or be without him, who is the originall of all entity, and causality?

There is much wisdome and justice in distinguishing causes & giving each their owne; whereof, whiles some have failed, they have

have run into injurious, and frantick extrems: Whiles, on the one ſide, wild and ignorant hereticks have aſcribed all to Gods agency, without acknowledging ſecondary cauſes; on the other, Atheous fooles aſcribe all to the ſecond, and immediate cauſes, not looking up to the hand of an overruling, and all-contriving providence; We muſt walk warily betwixt both, yeelding the neceſſary operatiõ of ſubordinate means, imployed by the divine wiſdome; and adoring that infinite wiſdome, and power, which both produces, and imployes thoſe ſubordinate means to his own holy purpoſes. Tell mee then; art thou croſſed in thy deſignes and expectation? Blame not diſtempers of

of times, diſappointment of undertakings, intervention of croſſe-accidents; this is, as ſome ſhifting Alchymiſt that caſts all the fault of his miſ-ſucceſſe, upon his glaſſe, or his furnace; but kiſſe that inviſible hand of power, which diſpoſeth of all theſe ſublunary events, if againſt thy will, yet according to his owne. Even nature it ſelfe will teach us to reduce all ſecond cauſes to the firſt. *Behold* (ſaith the Lord) *I will heare the heavens, they ſhall heare the earth, the earth ſhall heare the corne, wine, oyle, and they ſhall heare Iſrael.* Lo here is a neceſſary ſcale whereof no ſtaffe can be miſſing: How ſhould *Iſrael* live without corne, wine, oyle? how ſhould the corne, wine, oyle, be had without the yeeldance of

of the earth? how ſhould the earth yeeld theſe without the influence of heaven? how can heaven yeeld theſe influences without the command of the maker? *Oſe.2.21.*

When I meet therefore with a querulous husbandman; he tels mee of a churliſh ſoyle, of a wet ſeed-time, of a greene winter, of an unkindly ſpring, of a lukewarme ſummer, of a bluſtring autumne; but I tell him of a diſpleaſed God, who will be ſure to contrive and fetch about all ſeaſons, and elements to his own moſt wiſe drifts and purpoſes.

Thou art a Merchant, what telleſt thou mee of croſſe winds, of Michael-mas flawes, of ill weathers, of the wafting of the Archangels wings when thou paſſeſt by

by the Grecian promontory of t
dious becalmings, of pyratica
hazards, of falſhood in trade
breaking of cuſtomers, craft an
undermining of interlopers, a
theſe are ſet on by heaven to im
poveriſh thee.

Thou art a Courtier and haſ
laid a plot to riſe; if obſequiou
ſervility to the great; if thoſe gift
in the boſome; which our blun
Anceſtors would have terme
Bribes; if plauſible ſuppalpations
if reſtleſſe importunities wil
hoyſe thee, thou wilt mount: Bu
ſomething there is that clogs thy
heele, or blocks thy way; either
ſome ſecret detractor hath for-
laid thee by a whiſpering miſ-in-
timation; or ſome miſ-conſtructi-
on of thy well-meant offices hath
drawne

drawne thee into unjuſt ſuſpition, or the envy of ſome powerfull corrivall trumps in thy way, and holds thee off from thine already ſwallowed honor; There is an hand above that manageth all this; What are we but the Keyes of this great inſtrument of the world, which he touches at pleaſure, depreſſing ſome, whiles others riſe, and others againe ſtand ſtill?

Yea, let me make higher inſtances of you men of State, that ſway the great affaires of Kingdomes, and by your wiſe and awfull arbitrements decree (under Soveraignty) of either warre or peace, & either take up or ſlacken the raynes of Commerce, ſo framing the many wheeles of this

vaſt engine that all may move happily together; you may rack your braines, and enlarge your forraine intelligences, and caſt in the ſymboles of your prudent contributions to the common welfare, but know withall, *Fruſtra niſi Dominus*, let your projects be never ſo faire, your treaties never ſo wiſe and cautious, your enterpriſes never ſo hopefull, if he doe but blow upon them, they are vaniſhed. *The race is not to the ſwift, nor the battle to the ſtrong, nor yet bread to the wiſe, Eccleſ.* 9.11.

What ſhould we doe then, but look up to that Almighty hand that ſwayeth all theſe ſublunary, yea and celeſtiall affaires? It is the weake faſhion of fooliſh children to aſcribe all their kindneſſes, or diſ-

diſcontents to the next cauſe; If good befall them, it is the Taylor to whom they are beholden for their coate, the Confectionary for their ſweet-meats, not their parents who pay for all theſe; Againe, if the knife be taken away from them, the Servant is blamed and beaten with their feeble but angry hand, not the mother that commanded it; yea it is the brutiſh faſhion of unreaſonable creatures to run after, and bite the ſtone, not regarding the hand that threw it. Wee Chriſtians ſhould have more wit; and ſince we know that nature it ſelfe is no other then Gods ordinance of ſecond cauſes, and chance is but an ignorance of the true cauſes, and our freeſt wills are over-ruled by

the first mover, oh let us improve our reason and Christianity so much, as to acknowledge the secret, but most certaine hand of an omnipotent agent, in all the occurrents of the world; for certainly there cannot be a greater injury to the great King of heaven and earth, then to suffer second causes to run away with the honor of the first, whether in good or evill.

Secondly, what should we doe but kisse the rod, and him that smites with it, patiently receiving all chastisements from the hand of a powerfull, wise, just God? Had we to doe with an agent lesse then omnipotent, we might perhaps think of him as one said of the Egyptian Magitians, They could

could hurt; but they could not heale, they could doe evill, but not good; or we might feare something might betide us against, beside, without his will; finite agents cannot goe beyond their owne spheare, were the power of great Princes as large as their wills, none of their designes should be ineffectuall: Or, had we to doe with a powerfull agent that were not also infinitely wise, we might think he might be over-reacht in his plot: But now that infinite power and wisdome are the very essence of God, let us, what ever we doe, or may befall us, take up that holy resolution of good *Ely*, *It is the Lord, let him doe what seemeth him good*, 1. *Sam.* 3. 18.

But in the meane time let not

those wicked wretches, by whose unjust hand the just God thinks good to scourge his owne, comfort themselves with the hope of an impunity, because they are unwittingly tied in his executions: No, they are no whit the more innocent, because God beats his owne with their malice, neither shall they be lesse avenged because they have heedlesly done Gods will, whiles they despitefully doe their owne; *Assur* is the rod of Gods wrath, when God hath sufficiently whipt, & drawne blood of his *Israel*, by him, he casts him into the fire, the fire of that wrath which *Assur* feeles from God, is a thousand times hotter then the fire of that wrath which *Israel* feeles from *Assur*. Shortly, God

will have his due honor both in afflicting his owne, and in plagueing those that afflicted them; his agency is equall in both; *He turneth a fruitfull land into barrennesse.* Hitherto the *agent*, now followes the *meriting cause* of this change, *The wickednesse of them that dwell therein.*

God is an absolute Lord, *Domini est terra*; he is not accountable for any reason of his change: whether of barrenesse or plenty, there needs no other ground to be given but, *Quia voluit*; and even so it is in this stirring peece of earth, which we carry about us; Why this womb, or those loynes are sterile, that fruitfull, yea, why this, or that soule is so, he needs not give any reason but his will, yet so far doth he condescend to us, as to impart

to us an account of the ground of his proceedings; *Man ſuffreth for his ſin*, ſaith the Prophet; and the earth ſuffreth here for the wickedneſſe of the inhabitants: Evermore, God hath ſome motive for the inflicting of evil; As it is in the main point of a mans eternal eſtate, Mans Salvation is, *ex mero beneplacito*; *The gift of God is eternal life*; but his damnation is never without a cauſe in mã; *The ſoule that ſinneth ſhall dy*: So it is in this caſe of leſſer good or evill; when God ſpeakes of *turning wilderneſſes into ponds of water*, in the following words, ye heare no cauſe aſſigned but meer mercy, but whẽ he ſpeaks of *turning fruitful lands into barrennes*, now, it is for the wickednes of indweliers. This isa moſt ſure rule therefore, All judgements are inflicted

cted for ſin; Chaſtiſements are out of love, but puniſhment out of Juſtice; Yea, ſo doth God order his judgements commonly, that in the puniſhment we may reade the ſin, and in the ſin we may foreſee the puniſhment; and can confidently define, where puniſhment is, there hath been ſin; and where ſin is, there will be puniſhment.

I have heard and ſeene ſome ignorant impatients, when they have found themſelves to ſmart with Gods ſcourge, caſt a ſullen frowne back upon him, with *Cur me cædis?* or with the maleconten-ted mother of the ſtriving twins, *Why am I thus?* Alas, what mere, what miſerable ſtrangers are theſe men at home? There is nothing in the world that they doe more miſ-

know

know then themselves; had they ever but look't in, if but at the door, yea at the window, yea at the Key-hole of their owne hearts or lives, they could not choose but cry out, with holy *Iob, I have sinned, what shal I do to thee, O thou preserver of Men?* They would accuse, arraign, & condemne themselves, and would rather bethinke which of those many thousand sinnes which they have multiplyed against heaven, they are called to reckoning for, and would have no word in their mouth but *mea culpa, mea culpa.* Now as where punishment is, there was sin: so where sin is, there will be, there must be punishment. *If thou dost ill,* saith God to *Cain, Sin lyes at the doore,* Gen. 4. 7. *Sin,* that is, *punishment* for sin, they are so inse-

parable

parable that one word implyes both: for the doing ill, is the ſin, that is within doores, but the ſuffring ill is the puniſhment: and that lies like a fierce maſtive at the door, and is ready to fly in our throat when we looke forth: and if it do not then ſeize upon us, yet it dogs us at the heeles, and will be ſure to faſten upon us at our greateſt diſadvantage. *Tum gravior cum tarda venit, &c.* *Ioſephs* brethren had done haynouſly ill, what becomes of their ſin? It makes no noyſe, but followes them ſlily and ſilently in the wildernes, it followes them home to their fathers houſe, it followes them into Egypt: all this while there is no newes of it, but when it found them cooped up three dayes in *Pharaohs* ward, now

it bayes at them, and flies in their faces: *We are verily guilty concerning our brother in that we saw the anguish of his soule, &c.* Gen. 42. 21. What should I instance in that, whereof not Scripture, not bookes, but the whole world is full; the inevitable sequences of sin and punishment? Neither can it be otherwise; *Shall not the Iudge of all the earth doe right*, saith *Abraham*, Gen. 18. 25? Right is to give every one his due: wages is due to work; now *the wages of sin is death*: So then it stands upon no lesse ground then the very necessary, and essential justice of God, that where wickednes hath led the way, there punishment must follow: There is more need to apply then to prove so cleare a truth; How then I beseech you, honorable

ble and beloved, ſtands the caſe with us? where is the man that dare flatter us ſo much, as to ſay, there is not ſtore of wickedneſſe found in our hands: Wo is mee, we are in the eyes of all the world no leſſe eminent in Gods favours, then in our owne ſinfulneſſe: It is paſt our power to either conceale, or denye, or excuſe our abominable iniquities: Certainly, if we change not, we are ſure God will not; What can we then expect, from that juſt hand of the Almighty, but that he ſhould turne our fruitfull land into barrenneſſe, for the wickedneſſe of us that dwell in it? I may not be ſo ſawcy, to preſage by what courſe he will doe it; That Almighty arbiter of the world hath a thouſand wayes to his

his own ends; but it is not an improbable note of the Author of our *Fasciculus temporum*; that there is *trifarius cursus rerum, Abundantiæ, indigentiæ, temperantiæ*; a three fold course of things; of Abundance, want, tempreance: From abundance or excesse, arises animosity and delicacy: from these arises discord, and quarrells; and from these want; from want we beginne to learne wit, and compose our selves to temperance; that thrifty course raises abundance, *In circuitu ambulant impii*, as he speakes: Now what shall we say? Of the abundance and delicacy we have surfeited already too long; we are now in the quarrelsome part, that arises from our pampered animosity; and what can follow next, but our miserable

ſerable indigence and diſtreſſe? we may pleaſe our ſelves in the ſecure condition of our happy union, in the ſtrength of our wooden walls and our naturall Bulwarkes; But I remember what I have read of a noble and wiſe Captain, who when he was vehemently moved to take upon him the Defence of a ſtrong City, which was inforced to him by the ſafe ſite, ſtrong fortifications, plentifull ammunition, and inexpugnable walls of it; *Yea* (ſaith he) *but tell me I pray you, have you any covering betwixt it and heaven? have you any defence againſt the vengeance of that God, whom your ſins have provoked?* If thoſe ſins of yours ſhall draw downe Gods curſes upon your heads, to what purpoſe ſhall it be to indeavour

vour to keep your enemy out o
your gates? The ſtory applies i
ſelfe; In vaine ſhall we thinke t
ſecure our ſelves and our ſtate from
earth, if we irritate heaven.

There is no ſin that is dumb
there is none that whiſpers; every
one is vocall, loud, clamorous to
ſolicit heaven for vengeance, bu
ſome are more ſhrill and impor-
tunate then others; God hath been
pleaſed to diſtinguiſh their noyſe
Oppreſſion is one that hee heare
above the reſt; That hath two
tongues, both lowd ones, both
prevalent; The cry of the Oppreſ-
ſed, and the cry of the Oppreſſion
*The Lord will enter into judgement*
*with the Ancients of his people, and the*
*Princes thereof.* Wherefore? *The*
*ſpoile of the poore is in their houſes.*

What

*What meane you that ye beat my people to pieces, and grinde the faces of the poore, ſaith the Lord God of hoaſts? Iſay 3. 14.*

Contempt of Gods Miniſters is another, and that's a paying ſin whereſoever it is, *Ier.* 25. 4. Even *Moſes* himſelfe that was *mitiſsimus ſuper terram*, yet when he comes to ſpeake of affronts offered to *Levy*, can ſay; *Smite through the loynes of them that riſe againſt him, and of them that hate him, that they riſe not againe, Deut.* 33. 11.

What ſhould I particularize? *The Lord hath a controverſie with the land*, ſaith the Prophet *Hoſea*, *By ſwearing, and lying, and killing, and ſtealing, and committing adultery, they breake out, and blood toucheth blood;* Therefore *ſhall the Land mourne.*

*Hoſ.* 4. 2. Doth hee not ſpeake of our times, think you?

But above all theſe there is a ſin, which whereſoever it is, drownes the noyſe of all the reſt, and that is Sacriledge, which certainly, in what hand, in what nation ſoever it is found, hurries downe an inevitable judgment.

It was a fearfull word that of the *Pſalmiſt, Make their Nobles like Oreb and Zeeb, yea, all their Princes like Zeba and Zalmunna, who ſaid, Let us take to our ſelves the houſes of God in poſſeſſion: O my God, make them like a wheel. Pſal.* 84. 11, 12.

Indeed, how can it be otherwiſe? *Will a man rob God,* ſayes the Prophet? *Yee are curſed with a curſe, for ye have robbed mee, Malachy,* 3. 9.

What ſhould I tell you the ſtories

ſtories of *Baltaſar*, of *Heliodorus*, of *Craſſus*, of *Iulian*, of the Templars, of *Woolſey*, and of his Maſter *H. 8.* ſhortly, ſhow me the man, the family, the nation that ever proſpered after ſacriledge; I am ſure I have a great Author to the contrary; no leſſe then one of the nine worthies, *Charles* the great. *Novimus* (ſaith he) *multa regna, & reges eorum propterea cecidiſſe, quia eccleſias ſpoliarunt, réſque earum alienarunt, & militibus loco ſtipendii dederunt.*

We have known, ſaith he, great Kingdoms, and the Kings of them therefore to have miſcarried, becauſe they ſpoyled Churches, and alienated their poſſeſſions, and gave them to their ſouldiers for their pay. If any man have a mind to feoffe a curſe upon himſelf and

his posterity, let him defile his fingers with the holy things of God: Oh let this portion be to the enemies of my Lord the King and our deare country; But upon him and his friends, and his peeres and people that abhorre this wickednesse, let there be blessings from God even upon them and their seed for ever and ever.

Finally then, since there is no wickednes which doth not mainly contribute to the pulling down of Gods vengeance upon us, and our Land; Let us in the feare of God joyn all our forces together against all the raigning sins of the time: Let us never thinke we can spend our selves better, then in striving against the stream of our pressing iniquities: Wherefore hath God

God put the ſword into the hands of you great men, but that you ſhould uſe it to the effectuall cutting down of all wickedneſſe and vice? Wherefore hath God put the two-edged ſword of the Spirit into the mouthes of us his Miniſters, but that we ſhould lay about us zealouſly, in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon; to the hewing downe of the over-growne abominations of this ſinfull age? Yea how doth it concerne every one of you, who heare mee this day, if you would be but wiſe men, and good patriots, to put your hand to the work, and to bend your utmoſt indeavours to the beating downe of your owne ſins, and carefully to anſacke all the blinde corners of your hearts to finde out the curſed

*Achan*

*Achan* in your owne bosomes? Oh that each man would thus undertake to reforme one! How sure should we be that the good God of heaven would divert his fearful judgements, and graciously continue the blessings of peace, plenty, prosperity, and together with them of an happy government, and the freedome of the blessed *Gospell* to us and our posterity after us: which God vouchsafe unto us for his mercies sake, and for the sake of the Son of his love, *Iesus Christ the Iust*, &c. To whom &c.

FINIS.